

know whether, by asking your daughter to marry me I could hope to do as well by her as you were doing."

"And what did you find out?"

"Oh, I merely sent to town, made a few inquiries about you, found that you were comfortably off and a man of honor and repute, and it then seemed to me that I had a perfect right to go in and win—if I could."

"Don't you think that was taking an unfair advantage of me—of us?"

"Not necessarily, sir. You see, I already had looked myself up."

"Um. And you believed you filled the bill? You haven't a very small opinion of yourself, have you? Suppose we didn't happen to agree with you?"

"I know, Mr. Bronson, that all this must look to you as if I was a conceited prig, and I'm sorry—truly sorry, because I never come up to what I hope to be. Yet I have never done anything that I am ashamed of. I've done my best to make a success of myself. And I suppose I have acquired a certain amount of confidence."

"Suppose that Margaret and I—or let us say Margaret herself—should decide that you were not the right sort of young man—that you wouldn't fill the bill—what then?"

Patterson's eyes glistened. "I don't think I should ever give her up, sir. I suppose it's my nature to fight. And if it's a losing game, I'll fight all the harder."

"Do you think you are worthy of my daughter?"

"No, sir. I've never met any man who was."

Bronson lighted another cigar. Then he motioned Patterson to sit down. Together they rocked once more, looking over the distant sand-dunes, with the roar of the ocean in their ears.

"My boy," said Bronson, "now I'll tell you my side. When you arrived at this hotel ten days ago, and began to play golf and tennis and sit on the beach and make love to my little girl, I watched you at first out of the corner of my eye with considerable interest, but no concern whatever. Boys will be boys, and girls will be girls. I was young myself once. Besides, my experience is that when you have to watch a girl too hard she'll fool you anyway. That's the way I've brought up Margaret—to take care of herself. Her mother died when she was only fifteen, which was—well, it was more or less of a tragedy for both of us. I knew of course that some day some young chap would come along and carry her off, and when that time came I wanted Margaret to be able to decide the question for herself. And so I began by trusting her, and it wasn't very long before, knowing that I was trusting her, she felt the responsibility. The result was that I have never had the slightest doubt but that, when the inevitable moment did come, she would be able to make a wise choice. Not only this, but I've brought her up to be more or less of a business woman. She has been my private secretary; I've taught her to manage accounts. All of which has made her judgment worth while. Wouldn't think it, would you?"

"No, sir. I never suspected that in her."

"Well, it's true. It's the American way. It's the right way too. And now I want to tell you that she didn't speak to me first about this matter. I saw yesterday that something was troubling her. I suspected that it might be you, for I know Margaret pretty well, and saw that she was more than usually interested in you. So I spoke to her about it."

"Did she tell you that I had asked her to marry me?"

"Yes."

"And that she had—"

"She said to me, young man, what I have just said to you. She said: 'How can a man who plays golf so well, swims so well, and does other things so well, have had any time to do anything else?' The idea was original with her. She wanted to know. Being an American girl, she asked a purely American question. And so I called you over this morning to find out."

Patterson smiled. "You are both perfectly right," he said. "I asked Miss Margaret to marry me, and she said it was entirely out of the question; and when I persisted she told me she would think it over. Now I

understand. She wants to know me better. There is only one way to do this, sir, and that is—ah, here she comes now!"

*

Bronson and Patterson both rose as Miss Margaret came forward.

"Am I late?" she inquired.

"Too late for golf," said Patterson. "But never mind. We can go to the beach." He raised his hat to Bronson. "With your permission, sir."

"Certainly, sir. I see the New-York papers are just coming in."

They strolled down on the sand and sat just far enough away from the bathers to hear each other's voices.

"I've been talking with your father, Miss Margaret."

"I knew you had. I saw it in his face."

"I told him that I loved you."

"And what did he say?"

"He said it was a question for you to decide."

"That's just like papa. He trusts me so."

"It makes you feel the responsibility, does it not?"

"Yes."

"Is that why you have not been willing to give me your answer?"

"Possibly. I might disappoint myself, you know; but I couldn't afford to disappoint papa."

"You didn't tell me that before, Miss Margaret."

"I couldn't. I was afraid you would not understand. You might have thought me—"

"Too practical?"

"Well, yes."

"That only makes me love you all the more. I suppose a great many girls take things too much for granted. They meet a man and fall in love and marry him, knowing absolutely nothing about him."

"I suppose so."

"You don't care for money, do you, Miss Margaret?"

"I have never thought about it."

"But naturally you wouldn't marry a man who couldn't support you."

"Probably not."

"I think I understand what you mean. The man's manner of making money would count a great deal, would it not? You wouldn't care to

marry a quack doctor, even if he was making a million a year."

"Hardly."

"Miss Margaret, I want you to know about me. I want you to judge for yourself. It's an important thing to marry the right man. It's important for the man also. I want to make a success of my life. It was right of you to wonder how a man could play golf and tennis and swim and yet amount to anything else. And you shall know. To-morrow my vacation is over. I go back to town. I want you to visit me at my office. Will you do it?"

She looked at him. "At your office?"

"Certainly. In no other way can you judge of me so well."

"But—"

"Your father tells me you have kept his accounts. You can present yourself as a young woman who has a business engagement with me: you thus will be able to observe me and judge whether I am the sort of man that your father would approve of as your husband. Will you come?"

The girl at his side looked out over the distant stretch of water. "It is rather startling," she replied. "And yet why not? I'll think it over."

*

One week later at precisely nine o'clock in the morning Patterson entered his office. On the door in small black letters was the word "Manager."

He touched a bell, and a girl of twenty-five appeared.

"Miss Rose, I am expecting a young woman this morning. I wish to make her acquainted with our office work, with a possible view to a permanent position. When she comes show her in."

"Very well, sir."

The firm of which Patterson was the manager occupied the entire building. Patterson's office was on the fifth floor. A hundred clerks and bookkeepers, arranged in serried rows of desks, with huge books beside them, were all under his eye.

Miss Rose entered. "The young lady is here, sir."

"Show her in. Also bring in the mail."

There was the rustle of a skirt, the door opened and Miss Margaret Bronson entered.

Patterson held out his hand cordially. "Miss Margaret, good-morning. You are prompt." He bent over her hand. "It isn't business," he said, "just now, but—I love you!"

Miss Rose entered with an armful of mail which she deposited on Patterson's desk.

"Miss Bronson, this is Miss Rose. Miss Bronson will remain here long enough to get an idea of the business. Give her any information she asks for."

The telephone bell at Patterson's desk rang. He answered it. "Hello, Mr. Peters! How do you do, sir. Yes, sir, seventy thousand is our lowest figure. Very well, sir, you may see the head of the firm about it, but it will do you no good. What's that? Yes, my price. Think it over. Drop in. No, that's final. Good-by."

He turned to Miss Rose. "Make a memorandum that Mr. Peters wished a reduction of ten thousand dollars, which I refused, and put it on Mr. Leighton's desk."

"Mr. Leighton," he explained, "is the head of the firm."

He rose and showed Miss Bronson to the door of his office, where they could look out over the floor.

"In a large manufacturing concern like ours," he said, "where goods are being shipped all over the world, system is everything. Here for instance is an adding-machine that saves us incalculable labor. Then every bookkeeper has a telephone at his desk by which he can communicate with every department. Now if you will excuse me while I look over the mail I will ask Miss Rose to show you around."

Miss Rose was polite and communicative. "You couldn't have a nicer man to work for than Mr. Patterson," she said. "I don't know what he intends you to do—I believe he said something about bookkeeping or accounts."

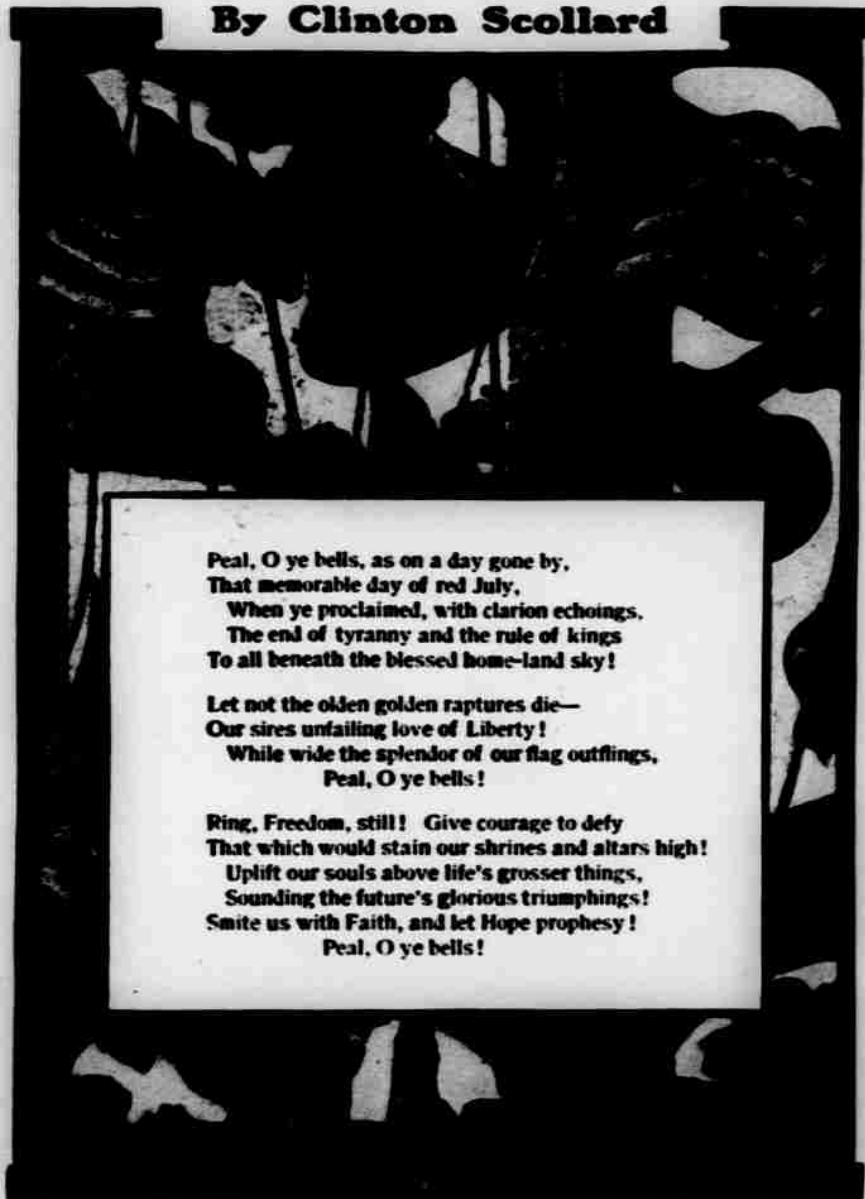
"What is his position here?"

"Oh, he is the manager. He has

(Continued on page 10)

SONG FOR JULY FOURTH

By Clinton Scollard



Peal, O ye bells, as on a day gone by,
That memorable day of red July,
When ye proclaimed, with clarion echoings,
The end of tyranny and the rule of kings
To all beneath the blessed home-land sky!

Let not the olden golden raptures die—
Our sires unfailing love of Liberty!
While wide the splendor of our flag outflings,
Peal, O ye bells!

Ring, Freedom, still! Give courage to defy
That which would stain our shrines and altars high!
Uplift our souls above life's grosser things,
Sounding the future's glorious triumphs!
Smite us with Faith, and let Hope prophesy!
Peal, O ye bells!